

**YOUR
MYSTERIOUS
TEARS**



**Nathaniel S.
Rounds**

Published by
The Spring-Wound
Mammoth Pancake Coalition
Distributed by
Fowlpox Press
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Your Mysterious Tears

From a primordial clam broth came a maggot with a band saw, leading a team of oxen into a dense forest in which could be found a thick undergrowth of quasi-poetic scribbles lost in translation. Haman only wanted a new purple coat, he replied. One claymation puppet cut in half to distinguish two men on a post. At Der Lebensmittelmarkt I perplexed a clerk with my request for pupusas. She fetched two salamis and a lunar eclipse.



Multi Purpose Mounity

Here in his lifelong home, the Yukon, lies the body of Major General Sir Sam Steele, his body preserved in Rustoleum and his eyes covered with bottle caps. The word 'truth', written on velum, is glued beneath his tongue.

Next to him lies Thelma, the bladder of an elderly woman, a gift from a forensic expert that served all his professional years

as a companion, confidant, and surrogate mother.

Both Steele and Thelma lie in a coffin carved from ice. They appear to float on a clear, aqua-blue sea suspended in air.

Steele's career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police went largely unnoticed until, while vacationing in Orlando, he came in first place in a blind-folded endurance sack race to raise funds for the homeless. Steele was quickly smothered in

interviews, accolades and rapturous applause.

The major general's 15 minutes of fame came to an end when, having stuck like a shadow to a man who had jumped ahead in a queue at a Toronto Dominion bank, he confronted him in the Seychelles islands and was offered a donut poisoned with plague-infected fleas, mercury-tainted bird droppings, no-name margarine and Zyklon B.

His final words, which he whispered through lips pressed close to Thelma:

"Mother Caitlin was a teen inventor and geneticist. The circumstances leading to her death are unknown but can be readably surmised. My mind is a well-oiled machine, where everything clicks into place and the truth endures."

No Passengers past Load Line

Klaatu Barada Niktor

King Sin the soldierfish smoked skinny cigars within spitting distance of the driver of the bus 60, the one notorious for its scent of pee and sadness.

Sin was hard to miss in his orange gills, cardboard crown and constant singsong punctuated by grunts and whistles and somewhat unlawful smoke rings.

“I, a tan bark, oak adult/to a brutal Akkadian: O, benevolent

me!” he said in that coquettish drawl that seemed at odds with his homily. He’d acquired his comportment from an indulgent mother who bathed daily in diazepam and cheap sherry.

“One decade—I *beg* your pardon—fifteen years ago—time really *does* fly—I photographed an A-list celebrity wedding at an *exclusive* mountain resort. Not a common face in the crowd. My photos blanketed magazines for *months*.

“Sold my ‘blad when the gravy train dried up. Tonight, I have a

date with Milwaukee's Finest
behind a mothballed high
school."

The driver snorted.

"I'll be singing to the *stars*..."
Sin's voice trailed off.

There are worse fates. Abel's
blood cries beneath the tall
grass. Maxentius lost his head.
Tyndale made tinder for
Stokesley. And King Sin the
soldierfish conspired with Cain,
sent head cheese to South
Africa, and lit the torch from
his home hearth.



Omelet du fromage

Ishmael Onager, the ill-tempered obscurest, is grading the condition of his Japanese jazz LPs and placing them in clear sleeves while listening to Moon Dog and watching a rare kinescope of a time travel puppet show performed by a trained octopus in front of a live audience. He can't take it all in. He is plagued with culture shock. Spastic colon. Ulcerative colitis. Take your pick. In the final episode of season five, Dagobert threatens his brother Charibert and arranges his death, then takes

the entire kingdom as his own. Onager drops the LP from his hand and falls face-first on his 1960's, German, two tone sectional sofa. Meantime, through lines and coarse grain and a digitally restored soundtrack, Amoghavarsha writes poetry from his man cave while he pays a beatnik to run his pizzeria. The beatnik ties his hands behind his back and steals his heart. "WILL THE TIME SAILORS BE QUICK ENOUGH TO SAVE HIM?" asks the narrator. The wayward beatnik joins his brother's motorcycle gang and takes a wrecking ball to forty-

six cities. Mass hysteria erupts in Judea. Bartimaeus sees all. Onager remains still, except for his left foot, which itches. He removes his sock and scratches it with a banjo ukulele. The narrator closes this episode as he does all others: “Tonight’s program is brought to you by Plutonium Electrolysis. It’s the comprehensive system used in clinics and spas nation-wide. When you want permanent hair removal, think Plutonium. Ask your doctor about susceptibility to hydrargyrisms, mercurialism, or silicosis.”





Nathaniel S. Rounds is grateful to be surrounded by wise children who unreservedly supply him with ideas, paintings, and indeed, serve as doubles for public appearances.

